



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your local health department:

If you think you may be exposed to lead at work contact:

Washington State  
Department of Labor and Industries  
Division of Industrial Safety and Health  
1-800-423-7233



Childhood Lead Poisoning  
Prevention Program  
P.O. Box 47812  
Olympia, WA 98504-7812

1-800-909-9898

For persons with disabilities, this document  
is available on request in other formats.  
Please call 1-800-909-9898  
1-800-833-6388 (TTY Relay).

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# LEAD AND YOUR KIDS

## A Parents' Guide



## LEAD

is all around us, in everything from paint to car batteries. Some uses of lead are considered safe. Others are not. But one thing is sure—**lead can be very harmful to young children.**

Most lead enters the body through the mouth. Because young children put toys and fingers into their mouths, they are more likely to ingest lead.

Even small amounts of lead may cause learning, behavioral or psychological problems. Often the effects are so subtle you may not recognize them.

More serious cases of lead poisoning in children are rare. When they do occur, the result can be tiredness, vomiting, and colicky abdominal pain. Anemia and damage to the kidneys can also occur.

## SHOULD MY KIDS BE TESTED FOR LEAD POISONING?

Because children are not routinely tested for lead poisoning you should consider whether your children have been exposed to lead. Use the check list on the inside of this brochure. If you answer yes to any items on the list, contact your family doctor or your local health department. A blood test can determine if your children have been exposed to too much lead.

## COMMON SOURCES OF LEAD

### PAINT



The biggest source of lead exposure for children is paint in older homes. Before 1960, paints contained high amounts of lead. Inside older homes, children can be exposed to lead dust and paint chips from peeling paint, especially during remodeling projects. Outside, lead in paint flakes and dust ends up in the dirt around your house where your children play. This lead can also be picked up on shoes or pets and tracked into your house.

### SOIL



Cars that use leaded gasoline release lead into the environment. Over many years, lead builds up in the soil near heavily traveled roads. In agricultural areas, some soils may be contaminated with lead from chemicals used to control pests. Other sources of lead in soil are smoke and dust from lead smelters, steel mills, and other industries.

### WORK AND HOBBIES



If you work in an occupation that uses lead, you may be bringing lead home on your work clothes. You may be contaminating your car and your home and exposing your family to dangerous amounts of lead. Children may also be exposed to lead from hobbies that release lead dust and fumes into your home.

### WATER



Water coming into your home generally does not contain lead. But your household water may be contaminated with lead from solder, brass fixtures, and lead pipes used in plumbing. Your tap water may pick up high amounts of lead if it sits for a long time in the pipes. Hot water or water that is naturally soft or acidic may also pick up lead. Boiling the water will not reduce or remove the lead.



# Tips for Reducing Exposure to **LEAD** in Your Home



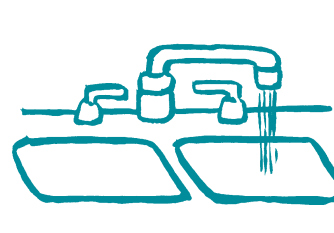
## PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN:

- Keep them away from lead paint chips and dust.
- Have children play in grassy or paved areas, not in dirt.
- Wash their hands and faces thoroughly and often, especially before eating and after playing outside. Clean under fingernails, too.
- Wash infant toys and teething rings frequently.
- Feed children lots of calcium-rich and iron-rich foods. If the body does not contain enough iron and calcium, it is more likely to absorb lead. Foods rich in calcium are milk, yogurt, cheese, beans, cauliflower, rhubarb, carrots, and celery. Foods rich in iron are raisins, beef, green vegetables, grains, and nuts.



## PAINT REMOVAL OR REMODELING:

- Keep painted areas in good condition.
- Take protective measures when remodeling. Contact your local health department for guidelines on removing lead paint. Never use a heat gun to remove old paint. Check the references and experience of any contractors hired to remove lead paint.
- Children and pregnant women should not stay in an older home that is being remodeled or having paint removed.

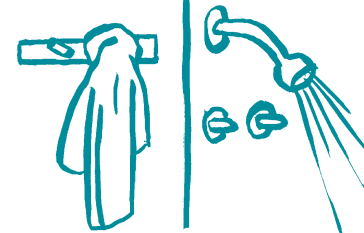


## IN THE KITCHEN:

- Always use **cold** tap water for cooking, drinking, and making baby formula. If the water has been sitting in the pipes overnight, run the tap for a minute to "flush" the pipes.
- Wash soil and dust off fruits and vegetables from the garden.
- Avoid using glazed ceramic dishware and leaded glass crystal for serving or storing baby formula or acidic juices and foods.
- Don't store canned foods in the opened can. Store foods and juices in glass or plastic containers.

## HOUSE CLEANING:

- Vacuum and shampoo carpets regularly. Don't sweep or dry-dust. Use damp mops and cloths to clean floors and furniture.
- Clean heating ducts and change furnace air filters frequently.
- Put mats at each entry door and clean them often. Wipe shoes before coming inside. Better yet, leave shoes at the door.



## OTHER WAYS TO AVOID LEAD:

- If you work around lead, change out of work clothes and shoes. Shower before coming home. Do not bring your contaminated clothing and shoes home.
- Take proper precautions with hobbies that use lead. Keep hobbies out of living areas.
- Don't burn painted wood in your wood stove or fireplace.
- Groom pets often. Keep them off beds.
- Keep the yard clean. Hose down walks, patios, and driveways.
- Avoid using home remedies or medicines which contain lead, such as greta, azarcon, paylooah, and kohl. They will make children very sick.

## A CHECK LIST:

Any child can be affected by lead, but certain factors increase the risk of lead poisoning. If your children are six years of age or younger, use this check list:

- ☐ My child lives in or regularly visits a house built before 1960 that has peeling or chipping paint.
- ☐ My child lives in or regularly visits a house built before 1960 that was recently remodeled, or where remodeling is planned or ongoing.
- ☐ My child has a brother or sister, housemate or playmate who is being tested or treated for lead poisoning.
- ☐ My child lives near a lead smelter, battery recycling plant, or a factory that is likely to release lead.
- ☐ A member of my household works at:
  - remodeling older homes
  - a battery factory or recycling site
  - a lead mining or smelting operation
  - a chemical factory
  - a radiator repair shop
  - a metal products factory (especially lead or brass)
  - bridge painting
  - an indoor firing range
- ☐ A member of my household has one of these home hobbies:
  - stained glass construction
  - ceramics with leaded glazes
  - making fishing weights
  - making brass products
  - reloading ammunition
  - soldering

If you checked any of the above risk factors, call your physician, local health department or the Washington State Department of Health for more information on testing your child for lead poisoning.



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If you have questions, contact:  
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**Sincerely,**  
**Health Education Resource Exchange Web Team**

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